

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK LOCAL LAW NO. ____ OF THE YEAR 2026

A LOCAL LAW CREATING ARTICLE III OF CHAPTER 14 OF THE TOWN OF WOODSTOCK CODE TO MINIMIZE AND PREVENT DANGEROUS INTERACTIONS BETWEEN HUMANS AND BEARS

BE IT ENACTED by the Town Board of the Town of Woodstock as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Intent and Statutory Authority

The Town Board finds that conflicts between people and bears are a danger to the people of Woodstock and the Town, and that such conflicts are primarily caused by the outdoor storage of food and food waste, whether intentional or unintentional. This Local Law seeks to refine the Town's Animals regulations (Chapter 14) to reduce those conflicts, keeping both residents and wildlife safe, pursuant to the recommendations of the Bear Task Force throughout 2024 and 2025. This Local Law prohibits the intentional feeding of black bears and requires incidental feeding to be remedied. This Local Law is adopted pursuant to the powers conferred upon the Town Board by Section 10 of the Municipal Home Rule Law and Section 64 of the Town Law.

Section 2. A new Article III shall be added to Chapter 14 of the Town of Woodstock Code to read as follows:

Article III Bear Remediation

§14-15 Purpose. Bears will readily utilize human-created food sources, and repeated access to those sources can make bears bolder and less likely to avoid contact with humans. This can lead to an increase in human-bear conflicts around homes and residential areas, especially when natural food sources are scarce. Such conflicts are a danger to both bears and the people of Woodstock, and it is in the best interest of the Town to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents and visitors to reduce those conflicts.

§14-16 Definitions. As used in this article, the following words shall have the meanings given in this section:

DELIBERATE OR INTENTIONAL FEEDING

Using, placing, giving, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering any material with the intent of attracting black bears.

INCIDENTAL OR INDIRECT FEEDING

Using, placing, giving, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering any material for a different purpose but which attracts black bears. This includes, but is not limited to, the storage of garbage or refuse, use and storage of birdseed or pet food, and use and storage of barbeque grills in a manner that is accessible to black bears.

§14-17 Prohibited Activities. It is a violation for any person to:

- A. Deliberately or intentionally feed black bears.
- B. Incidentally or indirectly feed black bears (including not abating a bear attractant, see §14-18) after receiving a notice of violation.

§14-18 Bear Abatement. All persons are required to mitigate bear attractants, which may include but are not limited to:

- A. Bird Seed. Do not store bird seed, in a bird feeder or otherwise, from April 1 through November 30 when black bears are active;
- B. Pet Food. Do not store pet food outdoors from April 1 through November 30 when black bears are active, other than the immediate feeding of a domestic animal;
- C. BBQ Grills. Do not store improperly cleaned or unsecured barbeque grills outdoors. Cleaning involves burning off food particles and cleaning or removing the grease pan (do not dump drippings outdoors);
- D. Food, garbage, recycling, and compost. Since bears have a very strong sense of smell, all human food and food-waste is attractive to a bear as food. In addition to bird seed and pet food, all human foods, garbage, recycling, and compost must be stored in bear-resistant containers or a bear-resistant enclosure, such as an electric fence or bear-proof structure;

§14-19 Enforcement. Violations of §14-17 are subject to the penalties set forth in §14-20. This article may be enforced by the Town of Woodstock Police, Town of Woodstock Code Enforcement Officers, Ulster County Sheriff, New York State Environmental Conservation Police, New York State Forest Rangers, or New York State Police. Any violation continued more than two (2) days (48 hours) shall constitute a separate offense for each day such violation continues.

§14-20 Penalties for offenses. Persons in violation of §14-17 shall be subject to the following minimum fines. All violations are subject to a general penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation.

- A. First offense: fine of \$100;
- B. Second offense: fine of \$200;
- C. Third offense: fine of \$300;
- D. Each additional offense: mandatory court appearance and penalty of up to \$1,000.

Section 3. Severability. The invalidity of any section, sub-section, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase, word, or other part of this Local Law shall not affect the validity of any other part of this Local Law, which can be given effect without such part or parts.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing in the office of the Secretary of State of New York as provided by law.